

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 09 SEPTEMBER 2007

You are listening to ZS6SRL the official Radio Station of the South African Radio League, the National Body for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is transmitted every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a web stream or Echolink by ZS6FCS visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details.

This, and previous bulletins, can be downloaded from the www.sarl.org.za. You can also read or download previous bulletins from there and subscribe to receive future bulletins by email.

Your news reader this morning is Hans, ZS6KR, on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria with relays on 3,695, 10,135, and 51,400 MHz as well as 438,825 and 1 297 MHz in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit).

SILENT KEYS

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the passing of one radio amateur some time ago and three recently:

Madelyn Greyling, ZS6LIE, a daughter of Ben, ZS6BEM, on 28 March 2007 after a serious motor accident.

Buck Taylor, G0OYH, ex-ZS1VP, passed away on 4 September 2007. Buck had been sick for some time.

Marthina Botha, ZS4MB, passed away on Friday 7 September 2007.

Frans Keulder, ZS6BXL, passed away yesterday morning 08 Sept 2007. He was the father of John, ZR6JWK.

We extend our sincerest condolences to the families and many friends of the deceased.

(PAUSE)

In the news today:

SARL AND HMO TO WORK ON A JOINT BEACON PROJECT

ZS6PTA TAKES TOP HONOURS IN VHF/UHF CONTEST

GET READY FOR THE FINAL LEG OF THE VHF/UHF CONTEST

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these and other important and interesting news items.

SARL AND HMO TO WORK ON A JOINT BEACON PROJECT

The South African Radio League (SARL) and the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory (HMO) have agreed to work on a joint beacon and propagation research project which will involve participation by many SARL members.

The project was announced by SARL President Graham Hartlett, ZS6GJH, during last Sunday's President's net and will be known as the SARL 40 Metre Beacon Project.

The beacon service will be of great value in confirming actual propagation conditions in real time for research and prediction of the ionosphere. The Space Physics Group of the HMO includes an active ionospheric component, and provides ionospheric data for the purpose of Space Weather predictions, which includes HF propagation prediction. The HMO has recently become the Space Weather Regional Warning Centre for Africa, which includes amongst other parameters the provision of HF propagation predictions. Therefore, the current Space Weather provider and the HMO will now be working together to provide one Space Weather Centre for Africa.

The HMO will collect data from participating Radio Amateurs and Educational Institutions detailing the actual propagation paths between different areas in the country. This information will then be correlated with the HF propagation predictions that have been made for the given paths. In this way a validation procedure can be implemented and confidence levels placed on the predictions given out by the Space Weather Centre.

In addition, using information collected from the beacon service, student projects will be developed within the Space Physics group to improve the HF predictions over the South African region.

A number of volunteer Radio Amateurs will host beacons at their stations. A centralized database will be maintained that contains a record of each beacon, its host Amateur and its time slot.

Dr Bert von Rahden (ZS6LP) will coordinate the volunteer Amateurs and maintain the central beacon database, while John Williscroft (ZS6EF) will provide essential technical design and consideration and supply the 40 m beacons.

The 40 m beacon system has been modelled on the International Beacon Programme. Volunteer Amateur Stations situated in all areas of South Africa will be provided with a 40 mW automatic beacon that will transmit within a prescribed time slot. This time slot is unique to each transmitter. The transmission period will be 55 seconds.

The 40 mW level has been determined by on the air experiments between a station in the Division 6 area (ZS6LP) and a station in the Division 2 area (ZS2VJJ). This level has been found to give the best dynamic range of varying propagation conditions. The 40 meter beacon, which will transmit in the CW mode for a short period, will send out the following message; "ZSXXXX", Locator data followed by a 6 second tuning period, giving the division that the station is located in. The repeat period is every 30 minutes for stage #1, with each beacon transmitting in turn to a maximum of 30 beacons. Each beacon will be internally clock synchronised before shipping the stations. In addition provision has been made for a stage #2 mode with 60 beacons transmitting in

a 60 minute period. The stations receiving on the designated frequency will hear a sequence of beacons from around the country. A list of beacons and their times of transmissions will be published so that stations not heard can be identified.

It is expected that the first 30 beacons will switch on in early October. More details will be posted on www.sarl.org.za and be included in future editions of SARLNEWS.

ZS6PTA TAKES TOP HONOURS IN VHF/UHF CONTEST

The Pretoria Amateur Radio Club has won the overall first leg of the 2007 SARL VHF/UHF contest with 841 811 points.

The divisional winners are:

ZS2: ZS2ACP, 3 508 points; ZS4: ZS4BFN, 41 445 points, Jan Botha 3 960 points; ZS6: ZS6PTA, 841 811 points, ZS6MRK 92 828 points.

No logs were received from ZS1, ZS3 and ZS5.

Congratulations to the winners.

CONTEST NEWS

GET READY FOR THE FINAL LEG OF THE VHF/UHF CONTEST

The second leg of the VHF contest takes place the weekend of 21 -23 September from 18:00 SAST on Friday to 12:00 CAT on the Sunday. This 42-hour contest has been divided into two sessions of 24 hours and 18 hours. This means that the same station can be worked in both sessions and thus increase the activity.

The contest is so designed to make it possible for any licensed Amateur to enter as a mobile or a fixed station and even a single or multi operator is acceptable during this time.

The following VHF and UHF frequencies can be used 50 to 51,5 MHz; 70 to 70,3 MHz; 144 to 145,55 MHz; 432 to 433,60 MHz; 1 296 to 1 296,50 MHz.

The following modes may be used: FM, SSB, CW and DIGITAL modes.

“It is a contest that can result in new DX records, but also provide fun and excitement”, Piet Badenhorst, ZS6PJB, SARL VHF/UHF Manager, said. “Whether you have a hand-held and a Slim Jim antenna or a large antenna array and base station, you will enjoy the contest”.

The overall winner of the contest will become the owner of a YAESU VX-2R 2 m/ 70 cm micro handheld transceiver sponsored by Let's Play Radio.

Full details and the rules are posted on the home page of the SARL web at www.sarl.org.za.

The Spring QRP Sprint will be run this afternoon from 14:00 to 16:00 CAT. It is a phone and CW sprint on the 40 metre band. The exchange is a RS or RST

report and the year you were first licenced. The rules are available in the 2007 SARL Contest Manual and were sent out on the HF Happenings mailing list.

ADHERENCE TO VHF AND UHF BAND PLANS IS IMPORTANT TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM USE OF THE SPECTRUM

VHF and UHF band plans are devised to achieve maximum use of the spectrum allocated to Amateur Radio and adherence to the plans ensures interference free operation and ultimately that great satisfaction of hearing a weak or satellite signal and make a QSO.

Amateur satellites have a very broad footprint and to ensure world-wide interference free operation certain segments of the various frequency bands are set aside for this.

For instance, for FM voice communication with the International space station and other manned space vehicles, 145,200 MHz is set aside for simplex operation or 145,200/145,800 for transponder type operation. Please do not use these frequencies for ordinary ground based QSO's. The segment 145,800 - 146,000 MHz is set aside for satellite operation. Please do not use this segment for terrestrial operation. Similarly the segment 435,000 - 438,000 MHz is also set aside for the amateur satellite service.

Band plans are internationally coordinated by the International Amateur Radio Union by mutual agreement. Band plans are available on www.sarl.org.za, look in the left hand column for licences, open the page and then click on band plans.

CLUB NEWS

The AGM of the Bloemfontein Radio Amateur Club was held on Saturday 1 September 2007 and the following members were elected to serve on the committee:

Chairman: Jan Botha, ZS4JAN; Vice Chairman: Martin Schwella, ZS4MS; Secretary: Dennis Green, ZS4BS; Treasurer: Angeline van der Merwe, ZU4AN; Member: Philip Esterhuizen, ZU4PE.

Many thanks to the retiring committee members and strength to the new ones for the work that lies ahead.

PRETORIA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB FLEA MARKET AND AGM

The Pretoria Amateur Radio Club will hold their next Flea Market and AGM on 29 September 2007. The Flea market will take place between 08:00 and 11:00. Their AGM will start at 12:00. Both events will happen at the ZS6PTA clubhouse on the corner of Lynwood and University roads, Pretoria. Tables for the flea market may be booked with Almero, ZS6LDP, on 082 908 3359. People who would like to attend the AGM must please contact Johan, ZS6JHB, for catering purposes, on 082 492 3689.

PROPAGATION CONDITIONS

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the expected solar activity will be at very low levels. The geomagnetic field is expected to be quiet in general. The expected Effective Sun Spot number for the coming week will be less than 5. Fortunately with the arrival of spring, DX conditions are also blooming a bit.

15 m and 20 m will provide best opportunities for DX. There is a possibility of 15 and 20 m openings towards India from about 14:00 CAT. There may be weak 20 m openings to Australia from about 06:30. From 15:00 there may be 15 and 20 m openings towards Europe and 40 m openings from 20:00. Contacts to the USA are going to be very challenging.

For the CW and digital enthusiasts it will also be worth monitoring 10 MHz.

Locally conditions on 40 m is going to be good during the day. It is once again time to work towards your 80 m WAZS award in the evenings.

Remember that this is only a prediction and that HF always has the capability to surprise you. You will never know what you are missing unless you switch your rig on, listen and also call CQ.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

9 September, this afternoon - The Spring QRP Sprint; 20 September - Closing date for registering for October RAE; 21 to 22 September - The second leg of the SARL VHF/UHF Contest; 29 September - Ladies Only ZU RAE course by Kempton Park RATS; 29 September - Pretoria ARC Flea Market and AGM; 4 - 10 October - Special space programme; 5 October - Take your handheld to work day; 6 October - SA AMSAT Space Conference; 6 October East Rand Flea market and AGM; 18 October - Class A RAE.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news stories of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news stories if possible in both English and Afrikaans to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to the programme Amateur Radio Mirror International, on the air every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 590 kHz. For the web stream and echolink by ZS6FCS visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links. A repeat transmission can be heard Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz. Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

Today's South African Radio League news bulletin was compiled by George, ZS6NE, and transmitted by (your name and call sign).

Thank you for listening. 73.

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